

A COLLECTION OF
NEW POEMS

By
Contemporary
Poets

THE POETRY BOOKSHOP
35 DEVONSHIRE STREET
THEOBALDS ROAD LONDON W.C. 1

THE CHAPBOOK

A MONTHLY MISCELLANY No 7 [Vol II] January, 1920

THE CHAPBOOK (a monthly miscellany) was founded in July, 1919, as a substitute for the quarterly, POETRY AND DRAMA, the publication of which was suspended at the end of 1914.

Each number is of separate interest. At the same time a continuity is preserved. Its general object is to entertain rather than to elevate.

THE CHAPBOOK appears between the 10th and 20th of each month. Its numbers include anthologies of new poetry ; critical surveys of literature and the drama ; reprints, plays, essays and songs. It is also frequently decorated with woodcuts and drawings.

This number is the first of the second volume. Terms of subscription will be found on the form attached inside the back of the cover.

See also p. 3 of Cover [*facing p. 32*].

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THE CHAPBOOK

Number Seven · Volume Two · January 1920

(Edited by Harold Monroe)

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(I) EIGHT POEMS BY H. H. ABBOTT

Black and White

I MET a man along the road
 To Withernsea ;
Was ever anything so dark, so pale
 As he ?
His hat, his clothes, his tie, his boots
 Were black as black
 Could be,
And midst of all was a cold white face,
And eyes that looked wearily.

The road was bleak and straight and flat
 To Withernsea,
Gaunt poles with shrilling wires their weird
 Did dree,
On the sky stood out, on the swollen sky,
 The black blood veins
 Of tree
After tree, as they bent from the face
Of the wind which they could not flee.

And in the fields along the road
 To Withernsea,
Swart crows sat huddled on the ground
 Disconsolately,
While overhead the seamews wheeled, and skirled
 In glee ;
But the black cows stood, and cropped where they stood,
 And never heeae'd thee,
O dark pale man, with the weary eyes,
On the road to Withernsea.

Moon

MOON, you were part of me, you know,
 Long ago,
And now you sit up there,
 And you don't care.

When Man like the Great Ape walked
 And stalked,
You did nothing but stare
 Everywhere.

When dog-wolves hunted through the groves,
 In droves,
Alone in your cloudy lair
 You'd sit and glare.

And even now through man and brute
 Lusts shoot,
When he tracks his prey round the sombre square,
 Her flesh the snare.

Down the world's dim ages you have seen
 The lean
And hungry brutes that call and pair,
 And rend and tear.

And they were part of you, you know,
 Long ago ;
But still you sit up there,
 And you don't care.

Pictures

To My Brother

I AM tired of this city with its clouds
Of choking dust, its clanking trams, its crowds,
Its weary women with bags and high-heeled shoes,
Where all things real are hidden up, who choose
To ask you if you'd like to see the pictures.

Pictures ?

I want to find a little stream I've seen,
Mailed dragonflies, in gold and blue and green,
Spinning in air above the marsh-mallows,
Kingfishers darting straight as peacock arrows
Along the line of bending willows, that lave
Their fingers in the swirling sunlit wave,
To hear the sucking glup of silver dace,
As they rise to the struggling fly on the pool's clear face,
The chirm of clustering gnats in play, black spots,
Over wild mint and blue forget-me-nots ;
To take off boots and stockings, bustle
About to find great pearls, freshwater mussel,
And gather white milkmaids and the yellow nipples
From the broad-bosomed lilies on its ripples.

I want to see the mill, renew the pleasure
Of rounded, clean-worn wood, to fill the measure
With fresh-ground corn, to taste sweet powdery flour,
And talk to the miller, white-coated, wise, by the hour ;
And hear the rush of the labouring water-wheel,
To see the mill pond, circling, lithe ; give meal
To the ducks, the arched swan lazily preening,
And find just one of its feathers, and, carefully screening,
To drop small stones on the lean and watchful pike.

I'd like

To find the boarded barn with its childish dreads,
The dim-lit dusty barn, the infinite threads
And patterns of cobwebs, the golden pillars of sunlight,
And millions of spangled motes that tumble in flight,
To smell its rich smell, and spring on the straw of rows
Of sheaves, to find the warm homes of nesting sparrows,
To catch the cutter's snowy-wet fragments of mangold,
To see the clear-cut hay, in layers fold on fold,
Draw water for the stock, as patient it stands,
To feel the maize-seeds trickle from my hands,
And throw it to the fowls among the stacks,
Watching it glide and fall from their glossy backs,
To gather eggs, and feathers from their wings,
To feel the intimate soft trust of natural things.

I want to play in lucerne, see the foal
Awkward, exulting, run and halt and roll,
The lark arise like a little crucifix,
Pulsing with life, to hear its notes that mix
Like many-coloured tassels on the kites of boys,
Swaying above : to see the slim corn poise
With bended head as it silently worships the sun,
To hear the noisy field gate shut with a run,
And watch the binder, armed like the axle-sword
Of ancient chariots, strewing the golden horde,
The team with their bow-taut necks and straining breasts,
With brass and coloured ribbons as their crests ;
To hear the musical hum of the machines,
Live things scurrying in the blackened beans,
To feel the stubble crunch beneath me, look
For sheaves to gather up and make a stook,

And sit and lean on them, and eat and talk,
To poise and pitch with silver-tinèd fork,
To load, to sink down when the waggon moves,
To mount the stack, look down the furrow grooves,
And see the fields and church come into view
As it grows high, to watch the thatcher strew
And interlace the sheaves and make a bend,
To feel the skin smart from the sharp straw end,
To wipe the dusty pollen from the face.

I want to stain my hands with berries, race
To gather green-cupped clustering hazel nuts,
To guide the gap-toothed horse-rake through the ruts,
To see the flint stones gleaming in the sun,
The sandy ants' nests, frightened shrews that run,
And brittle mushrooms in their grassy lair,
And, tired, to part from mates in the cool night air,
When the spectral river mist flows over the way.
Do I want to see the pictures ?

These are they.

The Call

HOARSE sirens bellow to the morning sky ;
Stumbling into the factory's yawning mouth
God's workers go.

These do not hear the silver bugle sound
That Theseus sent along Athenian glade
One summer's morn :
Nor Triton calling through the emerald ground
To long-tressed Nereids that had strayed
For lovers lorn.

These do not hear the clarion peal of Roncevaux
That hushed the exultant cries of infidel
For Roland slain ;
Nor catch the fairy piping dim and low
In proud Titania's grassy dell
And moonlit plain.

The black gates clash ; the wailing echoes die,
Once more begins the soul's long drouth,
Withering, slow.

The Umpire

THE sun beats down upon my head ;
I fix my gaze upon the yellow shining stumps.
Slim white figures, ghostly figures, stand round me ;
In the distance thin white lines and red dots
 Cross and intercross.
Slowly the bowler glides to the wickets.
 The sun beats down.
My head swims ;
I hear the crack of the ball on the bat,
The thud of the ball as it nestles in the wicket-keeper's
 glove.
 Suddenly, the white figures wake to life,
 Lithe limbs flash in the sun.
Then silence, tense expectant silence.
 The sun beats down ;
Once more the bowler glides to the crease.
 A gust of hot air sweeps my coat,
 And it flaps to and fro.
Mechanically I count the over :
One by one the coins clink in my pocket ;
 Powerless, I watch the spinning red ball.
 Quivering, the heat rises.
 The sun beats down.

The Mother

WHAT are you thinking of, little withered woman,
Standing, black, on the white highway ?
May-buds are cradled in the stark hedge needles,
Dead leaves are dancing, the young winds play.

Is it of the time when first you went sweethearting,
And the kind road smiled at you, and golden was the day ?
Is it of your first-born, who helpless looked up at you ?
Life for him is pleasant in a land far away.

Is it of the pain and the care of life's begetting ?
(Red haws are redder in the new year's sun.)
Is it of the maid who went skipping and curvetting ?
Long since she found her mate, and love is done.

What are you thinking of, little withered woman,
Standing, black, on the white highway ?
May-buds are cradled in the stark hedge needles,
Dead leaves are dancing, the young winds play.

The Car

I WATCHED the tram-car glide along the silver rails,
A casket sparkling red and green and golden light,
Trolley-wheel hissing on the taut steel wire,
And all around, the night.
Sudden, a jolt, and it was dark,
When lo ! with ever-gathering speed, afire,
It pierced the night's swart shield,
And passed on out of sight.

Spinning along Fate's molten paths my soul is hurled,
In contact with a magnetic Will on high,
Cleaving the mists of the world.
Then, in a trice, all light goes out
And swathing darkness round me is befurled :
Aloft I look—a thrill comes from the sky,
My soul lights up : on my predestined way,
Forward, aflame, I fly.

The Knacker's Cart

IT is one o'clock, and the night is white,
And the lane is a pallid ribbon of light.

Clop clop clop clop.
What is that coming down the hill ?

It has reached the bridge in front of the mill.
Shroud—crouch—by this hedge there is room.
The milestone gleams like a churchyard tomb,
The plumed elms shiver and thrill and sigh,
And the stars leap out on the tingling sky.

The whine of a dog : the neeze of a cow : and soon
A noiseless owl flickers past ; then the moon
With a round white face of startled wonderment,
Looks down on a tottering piebald horse, knees bent
With its head lopped down, and its ears thrown back.
The white-faced driver sways, and a black
Patch shows where part of his sight has been.
What is that lurching and moving, behind, unseen ?
It is covered with sacking, and on it are stains,
Red stains, and a hoof yerks out, and a black head cranes
At each jolt of the cart, and something drips ;
Yerks out and cranes and something drips.

Clop click-clop : clop click-clop
Why does the piebald horse stare round,
With its ears thrown back and its head to the ground ?

Clop clop clop clop.
It is past one o'clock, and the night is white,
And the lane is a pallid ribbon of light.

(II) TWO POEMS BY D. E. NORMAN SMITH

Day's End

THEY said : " The sunset's wonderful—
Golden and rose behind the trees."
" Come and watch at the gate with us ;
There's a tang of salt in the evening breeze."
But I was busy with homing goats,
And a milk-pail filling between my knees.

They said : " There are stars in the sky to-night,
And a faint, white mist on the sleeping heather."
They said : " There are gnats abroad to-night—
To-morrow should bring us better weather."
But I was feeding my yellow chicks
And getting to-morrow's fuel together.

They said : " You are missing the magic even—
You, with your chickens and goats and wood."
They said : " There is splendour on every hand.
You are blind—you could see if you only would."
But I was doffing my gingham gown
And coaxing my hair to a smoother mood.

They went in-doors to their cards and wine,
And I alone, at last, by the gate,
With the dear, familiar dark around,
And the day's work done ; so I could wait
To watch you come over the dim hill-brow,
Wearily bent with your burden's weight.

Then the stars burned low and passionate white ;
The sea-breeze carried your call through the night ;
And the gnats' mad promise of better weather
Was swift o'er the scented sleep of the heather.
And night's full splendour shone far and free
When you waved your shabby old hat to me.

Friendship

IS it not better, Dear, than love,
This cool, sweet friendship that is ours ?
You would not scorch in passion's flame
Such fragrant flowers ?

Is it not better, Dear, than love,
To walk serenely, hand in hand,
Free as the air ; yet bound by hearts
That understand ?

It is far better, Dear, and yet—
A fear hangs over me ; I know
Love will call loud and sweet one day—
And you will go !

(III) TWO POEMS BY GODFREY ELTON

Ballroom à la Mode

A HUNDRED western windows flame
And in the hall the dance is set,
Sweetly commence the violins—
But hope and I this night have met.

The easy guardsmen peer and nod,
On each your town-bred maiden smiles ;
In vain for me to-night she spreads
Her immemorial huntress wiles.

Champagne and whispers are not love
Nor this brief glitter gaiety—
And look ! beyond the ballroom door
The star-swept skies are cold and free.

The moon ! We are not gorgeous here—
Less always shown or said than meant.
A ghost of colour in the cloud
And in the rose a ghost of scent.

How low the slender rose-trees droop,
Like downcast maidens white of breast,
I can but praise them : All are fair :
She would be fairer than the rest.

Be sure a maiden such as this
In every pulse desires the night.
O, call her ! Can she still prefer
The guardsmen, the electric light ? . . .

The Next War

(Lines to a youthful Member of an O.T.C.).

*MOVE to the right in fours. Form fours.
(Fix your eye on the chapel doors.)
Dress by the left, remember, Brown,
And keep the butt of your rifle down.
And then some Extended Order. Hell !*

“ What’s the use of it ? ” Bobbie. Well,
Now Northcliffe’s allowed us a League of Nations
Emerges from pagelong explanations
This—*there’s to be another war.*

It’s all been arranged in the Press, you see.
And mark this, Bobbie, it’s not for me—
Look at my leg—this Greater War,
It’s not for Northcliffe, and what is more
It’s not for the journalists, Bobbie, my son.
They’re safe, the journalists, every one
Explaining weekly how wars are won
In columns of perfect prose : (unless
The new bombs hit London—a city the less.)
This is your war, my cherub ; a war
Where a drop translucent less or more,
Shed from a sky-borne phial, ends
Thousands of Bobbies and their friends.
Thousands of Bobbies ! Done for good
With scent and rustle of summer wood,
Done with the sting or whisper of rain,
Done with cricket and love and pain,
With old men, writers and cowards, done

With everything, Bobbie, beneath the sun.
So grip your rifle, Bobbie, my boy ;
Alternate rushes ! I wish you joy . . .
(Rifles then will be much the same
As the Mahdi's spears when the Gatlings came.
But it's jolly to watch you boys go through it,
And journalists like to see you do it.)

(IV) BY MARY WEBB

The Ancient Gods

CERTAINLY there were splashings in the water,
Certainly there were shadows on the hill,
Dark with the leaves of purple-spotted orchis ;
But now all's still.

It may be that the catkin-covered willow,
With her illusive, glimmering surprise,
Pale golden-tinted as a tall young goddess,
Deceived my eyes ;

And the white birches wading in the margin,
Each one a naked and a radiant god,
Dazzled me ; and the foam was flung by currents
Where no feet trod.

Only I know I saw them—stately, comely,
Within the leafy shadows of the stream ;
They woke amid the shallow, singing water
A fading gleam.

They left no trail for any beast to follow,
No track upon the moss for man to trace ;
In a long, silent file up-stream they vanished
With measured pace.

The hollow water curved about their ankles
Like amber ; splashes glistened on their thighs ;
Sun barred their lifted heads and their far-seeing
Yet sightless eyes.

Some were like women, with deep hair of willows,
Bare breasts and gracious arms and long, smooth hips,
And the red roses of desire half frozen
Upon their lips :

But most were massive-browed and massive-shouldered
And taller than the common height of men.
They went as those that have not home nor kindred,
Nor come again.

Still, where the birches fingered their reflection,
The thrushes chanted to the evening sky ;
Still the grey wag-tails raced across the shingle
As they went by.

Beyond the furthest of the saffron shallows
I lost them in the larches' rainy green,
And only saw the stretches of marsh-mallows
Where they had been.

You say the sallow and the birch deceived me :
But I know well that I beheld to-day
The ancient gods, unheralded, majestic,
Upon their way.

(V) BY H. KINGO ARMSTRONG

The Old Kings

THROUGH the dim portals of our time they stray,
With pale tremendous limbs, forgotten kings,
Searching again for their established things
Which seemed eternal but had passed away ;
And sinister echoes from a far off day
Mid shadowy multitudes dark whisperings.

The heart fears dimly 'tis a truce they keep,
Though men have built upon the dust of them,
Though lips have sung their ancient requiem,
There is a power about to break their sleep
And wake old passions through the roots that creep
From life into the night that covers them.

Shall freedom vanish like a morning tide,
Its knowledge crowned at the gates of Death,
Its glory empty as a gusty breath
Of wind that riseth at the eventide ?
Deep in the years the deeds of those abide
Who sought strange gods and finding lost all faith.

(VI) TWO POEMS BY H. K. CASSELS

Temple

IN the old poet days when we were younger
We prized the hours so highly that we strove
To pack each moment of our precious love
With a new symbol of that sacred hunger
We were on fire with ; we held festivals
In honour of it, and all quiet spaces
Where we had met were shrines and sacred places
For us to hold those ceremonials
And austere sacraments, we taught each other.
Then we had never a fear of sacrilege ;
But those black violating hands of age
Defiled one sacred shrine and then another,
Until there was not left one holy thing
Untainted for us. Now we dimly grieve
And wonder if we ever did believe
So delicate and perilous a thing.

As a lost traveller bursts through foliage
To find the ancient ruined sepulchre
Of many a long-forgotten conqueror,
A dim lost temple of long pilgrimage,
So have I come upon the ruined walls
Of our old temple, and my soul is bowed ;
I had not remembered that we were so proud
And that our love was so majestic ;
And I am wondering what we would do
If you should come upon this temple too.

Dawn in a Wood

I COULD just hear a brooding owl
Among the shadowy drooping trees
With tawny feathers on its wings
That fluffed and spread before the breeze
And in the brushwood on the ground
A hungry weazel was astir,
Otherwise there was no sound
But a whir—whir !

Until a little noisy ant
Pulled at a leaf quite brown and dead
And with a tiny rustling sound
Took it from underneath my head ;
Then the faint whirring broke and ceased
And left a void of sudden pain
And silence with a tired sigh
Turned and sank low in sleep again.

Until again it stirred and tossed
Murmuring in a troubled sleep,
While filtered down between grey leaves
A whispering light began to creep
And trees stood vaguely in the gloom
Like olden pillars of grey stone
And all the forest opened eyes
And hummed a sleepy undertone.

Then sudden twitterings arose
Here and there about the wood
And like a thread of scarlet sound
A distant cock awoke and crowed
And there was no more quietude.
From dead leaves settled on the ground
The rustle of small movements rose.
And in the grey leaves overhead
Song took the place of dull repose
And higher a dim pearly light
Shook from the pallid stone-blue sky,
And with a solemn wondering gaze
The heaven opened its great eye ;
With curious eager bashfulness
It peered between the twisted trees
And puffed a rising spray of mist
With a light morning breeze.

The undergrowth was swaddled soft
In wreaths of blue smoke-coloured haze
Slenderly drifting in the wind
Above the dewy spangled maze
Of grass and bushes dripping wet
And glistening in the virgin air ;
And then the sun came tossing high
The golden glory of his hair,
And with his mellow hunting horn
He woke the dusty world of men
And blew the charge of morn.

(VII) THREE POEMS BY CLAUDE COLLEER

In St. James's Park

THEY stole upon me as I read
How Faustus conjured Helen from the dead.
Two by two,
The tiniest first,
Down the path they came
Moving brave colour sharp across the drab.
Bright scarlet cloaks they wore
With pleated hoods,
And dresses blue,
White ribands round their prim straw-yellow hats.
Children of an Orphanage,
Taking their walk,
Stiffly, soberly,
With no babbling talk,
They moved along,
The royal colour mocking quiet forms,
No joy in movement or in face,
No happy laughter.

Think what might have been.
Fifty Red Riding Hoods
Chasing the leaves along,
Yellow and brown.
Old St. James's Park
A new fairyland,
Thick with forest trees,
Fraught with giant wolves,

Shy, lost princesses,
Elves, gnomes and witches ;
Think what should have been
Where the grass was green.

But hush !
You might have torn your cloaks,
Bent your little hats,
Mites of womanhood.

So you tread
Only where pavements wind,
Where there's no fun to find,
Stiffly, soberly, taking your walk.

Certainty

THERE come, I think, rare moments, when
Knowledge dwells in mortal men.
Very wise am I to-night
In this lilac-sweet moonlight ;
Thought's a truant, gone are bolts and bars.
This I know—
All the world,
Everywhere and everywhen,
All the world and all its men,
Sun and moon and stars,
They have made the things that do
Glitter, hide, play peep-a-bo
In my mind.
But do I desire, I find
Things nor you nor any knew
Till I drew them up for you,
And having loved them, having made
Their presence shining, unafraid
Shewed them you.
Also I know
That this wide peace enfolding me
An evening, so utterly,
Does surely flow
From centuries of striving men,
Proud nations tottering again,
From myriad devouring pains,
Inquisitors and hurricanes,
And the long agony of those
Who never pluck one wild hedge rose.
Therefore I tell it, fold it tight,
In the lilac-sweet moonlight.

Within the Wood

ONE hour of such pure joy
Is recompense
For days of dull annoy
And bitterness.
I sing the hour that stays
My banishment,
Body and mind do praise
Its full content.

A wood of virgin leaves ;
Sweet silences,
Banks where a dryad weaves
Anemones,
Banks where the moss limns green
Cool tapestries,
There flows a brook between
That happy is.

All through the slender trees
The gentle sun.
Proud with their melodies
Birds, one by one,
Jewel the sunny air
Hymning content,
Make rich beyond compare
My continent.

Joy of the bursting leaf
Grows in my heart,
I see beyond Belief,
I am a Part—
One with these living things
Brothers in Joy,
Unnumbered flutterings,
Joy our employ.

Sweet hour within the wood
I lay you down,
Lest my to-morrow should
Your gladness drown,
Along the lanes I'll walk
By farms again,
With nibbling lambs to talk,
And wise old men.

(VIII) TWO POEMS BY ANNA WICKHAM

The little old House

NOW the house of your Grandfather Hardy
Was a scented Shropshire farm,
Where a boy might dream in the cinders,
Without a thought of harm ;
For he who is burnt finds ointment
As soon as he understands,
And the sting of a burn may be welcomed
For the healing of certain hands.

O the hands of your Grandmother Hardy
Were lovely and strong and white,
For she rubbed on their red with goose-grease
After her prayers at night.
And they were free in giving
Yet never gave too much,
And not a baby living
Could cry beneath their touch.

Now the faith of your Grandfather Hardy
Was burning and clear and keen ;
His heart was like his homestead
Ordered and straight and clean.
And when his work was ended
Because the light grew dim,
Stole out of the clear-cut shadows
A lovely English hymn.

O the love of your Grandmother Hardy
Was good as farm-house bread,
For all that was strong she worshipped,
And all that was weak she lead.
And when her man was wounded
By a stray shot on his land
She chid her eyes for weeping
But could not raise her hand.

Then take the tinker's road, my son,
Or sit in the courts of kings,
Yet carry from your Mother
These two most royal things :—
Let the faith of your Grandfather Hardy
Stand for your pride in life ;
Let the hands of your Grandmother Hardy
Conduct you to your wife.

Due for Hospitality

GOD is a courteous gentleman,
And a most genial host.
Such could not rest
If any guest
Should leave his house, to roast.
Then fear not Hell !
Respect God well ;
He's great as man at least.
Before you're dead
See there is spread
Within your life, a feast—
Which it is meet
That you should eat
With courtesy expresst
Acclaim with mirth
God's pleasant Earth,
As fits a gracious guest.

THE following numbers of THE CHAPBOOK have now been definitely arranged :—

No. 8. February, 1920 : *Modern Prose* : A Critical Survey (under the Editorship of Alec Waugh).

No. 9. March, 1920 : *Three Critical Essays on the present state of English Poetry*. By T. S. Eliot, F. S. Flint, and Aldous Huxley.

The following numbers have already appeared, and copies may still be obtained :—

July. *Twenty-three New Poems by Contemporary Poets*. 1s. net ; by post 1s. 1d.

August. *Decoration in the Theatre*. By Albert Rutherston. 1s. net ; by post 1s. 1d.

September. *Poems newly decorated* : an Anthology of miscellaneous poems of the past, decorated by artists of the present. 1s. net ; by post 1s. 1d.

October. *Some French Poets of To-day*. A commentary with specimens, by F. S. Flint. 1s. 6d. net ; by post 1s. 7d.

November. *Rhymes for Children*, with appropriate Woodcuts. 1s. 6d. net ; by post 1s. 7d.

December. *Four Songs*.—*Nod* ; Words by Walter de la Mare, Music by C. Armstrong Gibbs. *At the Turn of the Burn* ; Words by George Townsend Warner, Music by Malcolm Davidson. *Melmillo* ; Words by Walter de la Mare, Music by Clive Carey. *Arabia* ; Words by Walter de la Mare, Music by Denis Browne. 1s. 6d. net ; by post 1s. 7d.

